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YEAR 2000 ASSESSMENT

EDUCATION FOR ALL

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Role of Media in Education for All

Avik Ghosh



Ministry of
Human Resource Development
Government of India



National Institute of Educational
Planning and Administration
New Delhi

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MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
NEW DELHI



NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING
AND ADMINISTRATION
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Editorial Note

The EFA 2000 Assessment process in India was set in motion around the middle of 1999. The basic framework for the review process was given by the UNESCO. The framework consisted of eighteen indicators ranging from literacy rate and enrollment figures to allocation of finances to primary education. Information on these indicators was to form the overall framework for assessing the progress made. In India, a National Assessment Group was set up at the MHRD to coordinate the effort. The Group felt during its deliberations that mere statistical indicators will not capture the whole gamut of efforts that have gone on during the decade. It was decided that while data on the quantitative indicators will be compiled, effort will be made to carry out a qualitative review of the situation in a more comprehensive and objective manner with the help of independent reviewers.

In delineating the broad contours for the review process, developments in basic education during the EFA decade was kept as the main focus. However, it was felt that in the Indian context, a natural time period for any such review was the launching of the National Policy on Education in 1986. It is not difficult to find the rationale for this decision. In India's not so smooth journey towards the goal of UEE, National Policy on Education - 1986 stands out as a significant landmark. The NPE had been formulated after conducting a prolonged nationwide debate on the problems and issues confronting the education system in the country. Further, along with the formulation of the policy a "Programme of Action" was adopted which clearly outlined the strategies and processes to be pursued for achieving UEE. This was followed by a framework of partnership between the Central and State Governments on a massive scale through a number of Centrally Sponsored Schemes. With this in the backdrop, any review of EFA will virtually be a reflection on the implementation of recommendations made by the NPE. Thus, for the present qualitative review, though the 1990's remain the focus, developments in the post-NPE period form the larger canvass.

As is well known, 1990's saw the opening of the primary education scene to external assistance on a fairly large scale. Possibly as part of the commitments made by the international donor community at the Jomtien Conference, the country saw the emergence of a large multi-State programme for EFA under the banner of District Primary Education Programme. Alongside this, Rajasthan initiated a fairly large programme of EFA under the name of *Lok Jumbish*. In the changed scenario, primary education in India truly became a subject of international scrutiny. The EFA projects have been in operation, gradually expanding to cover half the country, for six to eight years. These EFA initiatives coupled with various centrally sponsored schemes have undoubtedly made 1990's the most intensive period of primary education development in India. Meanwhile, the literacy scene also got galvanized with mass literacy campaigns stretching across the length and breadth of the country through the National Literacy Mission. Therefore, any EFA assessment exercise carried out at the present juncture will throw light on the performance of these initiatives.

Another development in the last decade that forms a part of the backdrop for the review is the Supreme Court judgment which, interpreting the constitutional provisions, declared basic education as a fundamental

right of every citizen requiring the State to make necessary provisions as a basic obligation. Currently, a bill to amend the Constitution is under the consideration of the Parliament to incorporate education upto fourteen years as a fundamental right of every citizen. Simultaneously, at the international level, basic education got a prime place in the development discourse as a component of the Human Development Index brought out by UNDP. These national and international developments have transformed the status of UEE from merely being a public sector activity of the State to that of a legal obligation, societal responsibility and moral commitment. To what extent have these been operationalised will be reflected in the review of the situation.

Having drawn the broad framework for the review exercise, the National Assessment Group identified a number of themes covering a range of topics from literacy to financing of elementary education. A meeting of authors was held to discuss the process of preparing the review and to get a common perspective on the purpose and expected outcome of the exercise. The reviews are based essentially on secondary sources, which document the developments in recent years. Each paper attempts to situate the review in the larger education scene in the country and draw broad directions for the future. However, the structure of each paper was decided by the author keeping in view the theme being dealt with.

Initial drafts of the papers were shared by the authors in two Workshops attended by several Central and State Government officials, educationists and representatives of international agencies. The papers were revised based on the feedback received during the Seminars. Individual discussions were also held with several of the authors while editing the papers. Some papers were rewritten. Several papers came at the last minute with very little time to edit or revise. Therefore, one can say that the papers as shared in this series are at different stages of finality. Some authors have already indicated their desire to revise the paper. Nevertheless it was considered important that they are shared in their present form at the World Education Forum being held at Dakar, Senegal from 26-28, April 2000. Thus, these twentyone thematic review papers and four state specific case studies, listed below, form part of the country portfolio on EFA 2000 Assessment along with the national report on the current status of EFA in India.

Thematic Reviews

Adult Literacy: Mass literacy campaigns of the NLM changed the common perception of adult education programmes and established that if done in the right manner they can influence the scene significantly. But what has been the ground reality? What has happened beyond literacy campaigns? Many scholars consider that the value of the literacy campaigns lies not so much in imparting reading and writing skills to adult illiterates but in their capacity to influence the quality of life of the people. There are three papers dealing with literacy and adult education: (1) *Indian Engagement with Adult Education and Literacy*, (2) *Literacy Campaigns and Social Mobilization*, and (3) *Changing Concepts and Shifting Goals: Post-literacy and Continuing Education in India*. Together, the papers give a retrospective overview of the concepts involved, a review of the progress made and also take a critical look at the processes adopted.

Girls' Education: Many consider that the problem of universal elementary education in India is essentially a problem of girls' education. The National policy on Education-1986 pointed out that the problem of girls' education can not be dealt with in isolation from the broader questions of women's status. In fact, this also led to special programmes addressing the issue of women empowerment such as *Mahila Samakhya*. Keeping this in view, two papers are prepared: (1) *Education of Girls in India: An Assessment*; and (2) *Education*

and the Status of Women. The papers while sounding positive highlight the long distance yet to be traversed for achieving the goal of UEE for girls and for addressing the issue of gender equity in education.

Early Childhood Care and Education: Increasing empirical evidence points to the value of providing preschool experience to children not only for improving their readiness for schooling but also as part of meeting the basic needs of children. The NPE called for taking an integrated view of early childhood care and education. The paper on *Early Childhood Care and Education* examines the situation comprehensively dealing with school based pre-primary education programmes as well as the more wide spread ICDS programme.

Reaching the Marginalised: Data clearly point out that several groups of children continue to remain on the margin raising serious questions of equity in educational development. Many groups in India fall into this category, which include the urban poor, child workers, children of ethnic minorities, and children with special needs. Four papers deal with this issue: (1) *Children, Work and Education: Rethinking on Out-of-School Children*, (2) *Education of the Urban Disadvantaged*, (3) *Education among Tribals*, and (4) *Education of Children with Special Needs*. The four papers though on diverse themes, assess the reach of the current programmes of EFA in meeting the educational needs of the marginalised groups.

Teacher and Teacher Education: As the Education Commission 1964-66 pointed out, the destiny of the country is being shaped in the classrooms. And, it is the teachers who hold the key position in determining the course of transaction that takes place in schools and classrooms. Thus, an analysis of the status of teachers and their professional preparation needs a close analysis in the context of EFA. Two papers on the subject are presented: (1) *Primary Teacher Training in the EFA Decade*, and (2) *Status of Elementary Teachers in India*. The first paper takes stock of the programmes of teacher training in terms of institutional arrangements available as well as innovative efforts initiated in recent years. The second paper adopts a broad perspective on the subject and deals with different categories of teachers involved in basic education programmes.

Teaching-Learning Material: Curriculum and textbook preparation has come to be generally perceived as a centralized activity carried out, directly or indirectly, under the control and supervision of State Government bodies. One could see significant changes in this regard during the 1990s. The first steps in decentralizing material production to make it more locally relevant were taken by the National Literacy Mission. The EFA projects also gave tremendous impetus to the process of producing child friendly textbooks. New framework of collaboration between Government institutions and NGOs also seem to have emerged. But the area is still riddled with many critical issues. These are dealt with in the paper: *Texts in Context: An EFA 2000 Review - Development of Curricula, Textbooks, and Teaching Learning Materials*.

Media in EFA: The 1990s, particularly through the mass literacy campaigns, demonstrated the potential of traditional media and methods in the field of education. Use of electronic media in building a positive environment in favour of EFA efforts also got a big boost during the period. What has been the overall role of media in relation to EFA? How can the profile of media in EFA efforts be enhanced? These and other related questions have been systematically addressed in the review paper on *Role of Media in Education For All*.

Quality of Schooling: The NPE redefined UEE to include not only provision of universal access and universal participation but also achievement of acceptable standards of learning. This brought to centre stage issues

related to quality. Two papers address this issue: (1) *Learning Conditions for Primary Education: A Review* and (2) *Learner Achievement in Primary Schools*.

Management Strategies for EFA: The NPE advocated for adopting a participatory approach for educational management and considered the goal of EFA unachievable without the active involvement of the civil society. Building partnership between Government and Non-Government agencies has been repeatedly endorsed by policy makers. But what space do they really occupy in the overall EFA effort? Similarly, role of private efforts in provision of education has come for serious consideration in recent years. The new *Panchayati Raj* initiatives take management issues into the larger context of political administration. These are the themes and issues addressed in a set of four papers: (1) *Role and Contribution of NGOs to Basic Education*, (2) *Decentralisation of Education*, (3) *Role of Private Schools in Basic Education*, and (4) *Participatory Micro-Planning for Universal Primary Education*.

Financing of Elementary Education: The move to make basic education a fundamental right and the accompanying effort to assess the funds required for universalizing elementary education has brought to sharp focus the question of financing elementary education in India. Acceptance of relatively large size support from external funding agencies for the purpose has compounded the issue. There are some who still consider that India can and should finance its basic education from domestic sources. Expectation in some quarters that privatisation could help mobilize substantial resources for EFA has added a third dimension to the debate. These issues are dealt with in the paper: *Financing of Elementary Education in India*.

State Specific Case Studies

It is fully recognized that sustainable change and development in basic education is highly conditioned by State specific contexts. Mere funds and schemes from the Centre will not guarantee the achievement of UEE goals. It is highly dependent on traditions and values of the local people; commitment and enthusiasm of the State level educational leadership; and capacity to adopt innovative approaches. Viewed from such a perspective authentic accounts of EFA achievement would demand understanding the processes, problems and prospects of achieving EFA in every State independently. But, that would have been too ambitious. In depth analysis of the situation was carried out in four selected States, namely, Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. From the EFA process and achievement point of view, the four States get self-selected. Success of Himachal Pradesh came into lime light with the PROBE study which pointed out how the State has gone way ahead of some of its neighbouring States. The study on Himachal Pradesh which is aptly entitled: *Primary Education in Himachal Pradesh: Examining a Success Story*, captures the factors contributing to the relatively quick progress made by the State. The Mizoram study: *EFA in Mizoram: The Dynamics of Success* brings out the unique role played by local youth and women organizations within the background of pioneering work done by religious organizations. Tamil Nadu case study, *Progress Towards Education for All: The Case of Tamil Nadu*, presents a success story of a different kind. The overt social policies and programmes of the State, including the famous Nutritious Noon Meal Scheme, are attributed to have made a significant impact on school enrollment in the 1980s. Subsequently, with its apparent success in controlling the population growth, the state has got the opportunity to pursue quality concerns of EFA in an effective manner. Rajasthan cannot stake claim to join the company of the other three States based on quantitative progress in EFA. In the league table of States of India, Rajasthan continues to occupy a very low rank. The case of EFA in Rajasthan is entitled, *Universal Elementary Education in Rajasthan: A Study with Focus on Innovative Strategies*. The study takes a look at exemplar practices adopted in two

major programmes contributing to EFA goals, namely, *Shiksha Karmi* and *Lok Jumbish*.

The review exercise was carried out with the full involvement of the Department of Education, Government of India. I should record my thanks to the Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO for giving not only full support and cooperation but also a free hand in carrying out the work. In particular, I should acknowledge the special interest taken by Mr. Champak Chatterji and Mr. Abhimanyu Singh. The task was carried out with financial assistance from UNESCO and UNDP. Support has also been forthcoming from other agencies such as UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Bank in carrying out several supportive activities involved in the exercise. Without this generous support it would not have been possible to complete the work.

In the beginning, the idea of bringing together more than twentyfive experts from across the country to contribute to the review series appeared to be too ambitious. But the personal commitment of the authors saw the whole exercise through. Editing the papers, smoothening the sharp edges and filling in the fuzzy spots, but without disturbing the integrity of the arguments of the reviewers was a challenging task. But the exercise has been done in a spirit of collaboration contributing to the common cause of achieving the goals of EFA. I would like to thank all the authors for the unhesitating professional support and friendly cooperation extended in completing the work.

The EFA 2000 Assessment process began nearly a year ago. The project including the preparation of the national EFA Report was implemented by NIEPA. Unquestioned support from the Director of NIEPA and the Administration was critical for the completion of the work. Bringing out the papers in print in record time was possible due to the total involvement of the Publication Unit of NIEPA. I should acknowledge the professional help and guidance given by Professor M.S. Yadav in editing the papers. Contribution of Dr. Mona Sedwal to the whole exercise was enormous. Working as a single person EFA Cell, she coordinated a variety of activities, apart from contributing substantially to the editing work.

The review papers may not be euphoric about the status of EFA in the country. Yet, all of them are emphatic that the 1990s have broken new grounds in almost every area of basic education whether the reference is to adult literacy, decentralized planning, improved access, preparation of teaching-learning material or reaching the marginalised. Progress during the last decade demonstrates that though difficult, the EFA goals are not unachievable. It is hoped that the objective documentation resulting from the exercise will help steer the EFA activities in the year 2000 and onwards with increased pace and intensity.

New Delhi
April 2000

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About the Author

Avik Ghosh has a long experience specialising in electronic media and development communication. For the last few years he has been writing and publishing on media in adult education. He has also contributed directly to designing media activities related to EFA and in particular, the National Literacy Mission. Currently he is a Professor at the National Institute of Adult Education.

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Abbreviations

BEP	:	Bihar Education Project
BGVJ	:	Bharat Gyan Vigyan Jatha
BRC	:	Block Resource Centre
CE	:	Continuing Education
CEC	:	Consortium for Educational Communication
CIET	:	Central Institute of Educational Technology
CRC	:	Cluster Resource Centre
DD	:	Doordarshan
DECU	:	Development and Educational Communication Unit
DPEP	:	District Primary Education Programme
DRS	:	Direct Reception Sets
DSERT	:	Department of State Educational Research and Training
DTI	:	District Training Institute
ECCE	:	Early Childhood Care and Education
EFA	:	Education for All
EGS	:	Education Guarantee Scheme
ETV	:	Educational Television
EVS	:	Environmental Studies
HPT	:	High Power Transmitter
ICPD	:	International Conference on Population and Development
ICT	:	Information and Communication Technologies
IGNOU	:	Indira Gandhi National Open University
IIT	:	Indian Institute of Technology
ILY	:	International Literacy Year
INSAT	:	Indian National Satellite
ISRO	:	Indian Space Research Organisation
ITP	:	Interactive Training Programme
JDCP	:	Jhabua Development Communications Project
KSSP	:	Kerala Shashtra Sahitya Parishad
LPT	:	Low Power Transmitter

MHRD	:	Ministry of Human Resource Development
MLL	:	Minimum Levels of Learning
NCERT	:	National Council for Educational Research and Training
NEEM	:	National Elementary Education Mission
NGO	:	Non Governmental Organisation
NLM	:	National Literacy Mission
NLMA	:	National Literacy Mission Authority
NPE	:	National Policy on Education
NSSO	:	National Sample Survey Organisation
OB	:	Operation Blackboard
PL	:	Post Literacy
PRI	:	Panchayati Raj Institutions
PROBE	:	Public Report on Basic Education
RCCP	:	Radio-cum-Cassette Player
SAARC	:	South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation
SC/ST	:	Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribes
SIET	:	State Institute of Educational Technology
SITE	:	Satellite Instructional Television Experiment
SRC	:	State Resource Centre
SRI	:	Social and Rural Research Institute
TDCC	:	Training and Development Communication Channel
TLC	:	Total Literacy Campaign
TTTI	:	Technical Teachers' Training Institute
UEE	:	Universalisation of Elementary Education
UGC	:	University Grants Commission
UPE	:	Universalisation of Primary Education
VEC	:	Village Education Committee
ZSS	:	Zilla Saksharta Samiti (District Literacy Committee)

Introduction

“Education undoubtedly has an important role to play in any attempt to deal with the booming, intertwining communication networks which, by allowing the world to listen in on itself, truly makes all people neighbours Let us not forget, however, that a very large underprivileged population remains excluded from these developments, in areas without electricity, for instance.”

Learning: The Treasure Within, UNESCO, 1996

Soon after becoming Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi gave a call to lead India into the 21st Century based on the induction of new technology, professional management and human resource development. He initiated a review of the existing education policy and urged that science and technology should be used to address the major problems of illiteracy, infant mortality, lack of drinking water and other social ills. Together, these measures presented a refreshing attitude towards human development and captured the imagination of the middle-class in India. The series of discussions and meetings that preceded the formulation of the National Policy on Education - 1986 (NPE) allowed wide participation by parents, teachers, planners, researchers, social workers and academics in the policy formulation process. Public opinion was built up on the need for greater investments in basic education and correction of the gender discrimination in educational opportunities.

Among the five Technology Missions established at that time to address basic problems, eradication

of adult illiteracy was one of them. Operation Blackboard (OB) setting down norms of basic facilities and making them available in primary schools, providing easier access to primary school for every child and the initiative of the National Literacy Mission (NLM) to make 80 million adults in the age-group 15-35 years literate by 1995 were the countrywide and significant programmes launched with enthusiasm. A much smaller, experimental programme called Mahila Samakhya addressing the NPE mandate of providing empowerment of women through education was also started in 10 districts.

Though the media in India do not generally give much attention to education or social development, the sheer news value of NPE or the dramatic Operation Blackboard initiative and the high profile Technology Missions with regular briefings and consultations with the media in the State capitals kept these issues alive in the public mind. This was before the international initiative culminating in the World Conference on Education for All that was held in Jomtien, Thailand.

Usually media is understood to mean newspapers, radio, television and may be cinema. These are the mass media that provide news and information and help in building public opinion. In a country like India, where the reach of mass media is limited by poverty, inaccessibility and low literacy levels, other means of communication through word of mouth, community events, and performances by mobile, cultural troupes play a crucial role in providing information and opinion-building.

In the context of the Role of Media in Education for All (EFA) we shall therefore not only look at the role of the mass media but also examine other innovative means and modes that have been adopted to create awareness and generate demand for literacy and basic education. In other words, all means adopted to create a positive climate in favour of basic education and motivating parents to enrol children, especially girls, in primary schools and encouraging those who had dropped out to attend non-formal education centres should be regarded as a mediation to assist in decision-making and resultant action.

At the same time, media has a 'watchdog' role in the society to ensure that the facilities for basic education provided through public funds are adequate to meet the needs and that utilisation is proper and sufficient. The critical need for greater investments in basic education has to be appreciated by society at large so that financial allocations are increased accordingly. Very often, government schools are poor in quality and neglected because the children attending them come from economically disadvantaged families. Mounting pressure on the administration to

improve the quality of these schools through reporting and campaigning is another aspect of the role of media.

In recent years, the media scene has become more competitive with the coming of private TV channels and radio stations with their own newscasts. While government controlled media still dominates the electronic media, the monopoly is broken and other opinions and viewpoints are now available to the viewers to arrive at their own conclusions. Owing to economic liberalisation and dependence on advertising, mass media tends to highlight business and politics mainly, and focus on the sensational, entertaining and glamorous. Education is a low priority and basic education neglected even more. However, within this limitation, there is scope for advocacy through the media and over the years sensitivity to issues in basic education and concern for universalisation of elementary education has increased significantly.

One aspect of the proliferation of mass media channels, particularly FM radio and satellite TV channels in urban areas, has been the impact of such media on young minds. In an era of free market operations, persuasive communications target potential consumers and children are an important market segment. Apart from direct product advertising, there are programmes that promote lifestyles and values that have been a cause for concern among teachers and parents.

The positive aspect is the availability of information through images and sounds from faraway lands and people that were hitherto unknown to our school children beyond the textbooks. Sports and

adventure, nature, history and current events come alive to the viewers. Young minds absorb information readily and question outdated facts and outmoded views expressed in their textbooks. They begin to question and those in authority are sometimes unable to adapt fast enough. At the other extreme, impressionable minds get taken in by the heroics of fantasy characters and imitate culturally alien practices that become harmful at times. The impact of media on children and their education is a vast and important subject. It is not possible to do justice to it within the scope of this paper and so, it remains an uncovered area in this review.

Rural areas, on the other hand, in many parts of India still remain inaccessible and unreached by

the mass media. During the literacy campaigns and other social mobilisation efforts for rural development and family welfare, new innovative methods have been found to reach the far-flung hamlets in remote villages and neglected poor communities. Cultural performances combined with an exhibition and interaction with the people helped communities to accept the new idea of educating girls and believing that change in their lives is possible. The *kalajatha* that was launched to promote literacy in 1990 demonstrated that communication is a process of engagement and dialogue that is not dependent on technology or high degree of professional skills (though these help) but rather relied on the sincerity and dedication of the interlocutors.

Opinion Building for EFA – A Brief Review

Beginning with the discussions around the National Policy on Education in 1986 there has been a consistent shift in public perception regarding the need for greater emphasis on basic education, particularly for girls. The launch of the National Literacy Mission (NLM) in 1988 as a societal mission to make 80 million adults in the age-group 15-35 years literate by 1995 was a major initiative that was adequately picked up by the media. When Ernakulam district became fully literate through the literacy campaign initiated in the district with the active co-operation of the district administration, educational institutions and a prominent non-governmental organisation (NGO) – Kerala Shashtra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP) – it was a significant achievement. Publicity and coverage in the media helped in the adoption of the campaign mode as the strategy for NLM. Kerala achieving fully literate status soon afterwards, in 1990, which was also the International Literacy Year (ILY), made news and brought literacy to the front-page headline. In that sense, the Jomtien Meeting and EFA Declaration came when India was poised for a shift in priority and public opinion reflected in the editorial coverage and political manifestos endorsed the commitment towards the goal of Education for All by 2000.

It was the convergence of the concern for the healthy development and basic education of the

girl child (1990 was also the SAARC Year for the Girl Child), the upsurge of the voluntary spirit manifest in the literacy efforts initiated in several districts and the early success of the literacy campaigns in Kerala and pockets of other States, supported by positive reporting and coverage in the media, that ensured that successive governments and political parties of different hues gave due importance to basic education. No doubt international pressure was mounting and external funding was being made available for several basic education projects in the different states. Through the literacy campaigns a greater demand for primary education was becoming evident as parents showed their interest in getting their children, including daughters, educated.

The 1991, Census figure of 52.2 per cent literacy rate for the country as a whole gave hope to the many literacy workers as it also showed the enormous task that lay ahead to cover the remaining large numbers to be made literate. Even though India launched a programme of economic liberalisation, the issue of basic education as a necessary investment in human resource development was kept alive in the media through the discussions on 'social safety net' and 'structural adjustment with a human face'. In a stratified and fragmented society, it is not easy to mobilise support for basic education of the poor and disadvantaged.

The perception of a stagnant job market and political formations that induce greater reservations for disadvantaged groups make a volatile mixture leading to discord and violence. Even so, the media captured the plight of the poor and alerted readers with regard to the urgent need for greater attention and investments in basic education. It is indeed a sign of maturity that there has been unanimity about increased allocation for basic education and eradication of illiteracy. It is a different matter that promises made before elections have not been kept up or there has been delay in implementation.

While it is true that media do not regard basic education and other social development issues as a great priority, it is the thrust given through the National Literacy Mission's (NLM) early success and the Jomtien EFA Declaration that kept the issue alive and included in the national agenda of priorities. Regular reporting from the field, though infrequent, documented the travails of the literacy movement. A story of the exemplary courage of a village woman in closing down the liquor shop in a village that was included in a literacy primer in Andhra Pradesh sparked an 'anti-arack' agitation by women attending literacy classes in Nellore district. That movement soon swept across the whole state and forced the state government to impose prohibition and it became an election issue. Linking literacy with empowerment was amply demonstrated in this experience of Nellore District of Andhra Pradesh. The similar, though not as dramatic, experiences in other educational projects like Mahila Samakhya addressing the issue of women's empowerment were given focus in the media during the run-up to the Beijing Women's Conference in 1995. Events like that and other

earlier meetings like the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994 and the follow up summit meeting of nine most populous countries on EFA in New Delhi in 1993 contributed to adding news value to basic education and ensured due media coverage.

Generally speaking, three distinct phases of media coverage could be demarcated since the mid-eighties when the new National Policy on Education was formulated. The early phase was one of enthusiasm and much public discussion on universalisation of elementary education (UEE), shift of priority from higher education, greater attention to girls' enrolment, reaching out to tribal and nomadic groups, adult literacy and improvement in quality based on child-centred learning. The establishment of the National Literacy Mission (NLM) and Operation Blackboard (OB) were the landmarks of this phase. The next phase came with the Jomtien Declaration, early success of the Total Literacy Campaigns (TLC) and its effective role in social mobilisation for literacy and primary education, and the formulation of major innovative UPE/UEE projects like the Bihar Education Project (BEP) and Lok Jumbish in Rajasthan culminating in the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP).

If the first phase was marked by the freshness of enthusiasm to address the wide gap in social opportunity through basic education with the support of all sections of society and formulation of a societal mission like NLM, the second phase demonstrated the efficacy of induction of voluntary agencies or NGOs and building community support groups and establishing decentralised

(district level) structures like the Zilla Saksharta Samities (ZSS) and Village Education Committees (VEC) which blended well with the new role of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI). A marked shift from the government-controlled, inspectorial system to a more people-friendly, community-based system was gradually taking shape.

However, the third phase in this process could be seen as a rights and entitlement debate centred around the preparation and introduction of the Bill on the Right to Primary Education as a Fundamental Right in the Rajya Sabha in 1997. While there may be merit in legislative action, attention got shifted from the reporting in the field to lobbying and debating the finer points of law and its interpretations. The Bill finally got bogged down and did not get discussed in Parliament. Any effort towards social mobilisation towards primary education (like the literacy campaigns) could not take off because the Centre – State debate on the roles and responsibilities and bearing the financial burden of the implications of the Bill could not be resolved amicably. Very recently, a fresh initiative is being taken by the Government of India to launch a Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a campaign for UEE, and social mobilisation is an integral part of that initiative.

In the meanwhile, the initial enthusiasm of the early years waned. While the literacy programme expanded to cover most of the country, without sufficient groundswell of community support, it became increasingly bureaucratic and controlled by the government officials. The absence of a durable adult and continuing education programme as a follow up to the basic literacy

campaign resulted in relapse into illiteracy. Media lost interest in the issue and moved on to the more urgent issue of politics with three general elections in four years.

For a short while, however, the award of the Nobel Prize to Professor Amartya Sen who has championed the cause of basic entitlements like primary health care and basic education, and his visit to India caught the media glare. He was critical of prevalent government policy and low financial allocation to these sectors and released the Public Report on Basic Education (PROBE) which showed that the poor want meaningful education for their children and are willing to bear enormous hardships for that purpose. Even children who work in the fields or at home have adequate free time for school or study. The school calendar for rural areas do not take into account seasonal agricultural activities and weather conditions. Attitudes of teachers and school management as well as the textbooks are often biased against the poor and gender sensitivity is absent.

To end on a happier note, the National Sample Survey Organisation's (NSSO) data has shown a marked increase in the literacy rate in the seven years since the last Census of 1991. A jump of ten percent points – from 52.2 per cent in 1991 to 62.2 per cent in 1997 – is a significant achievement. The media has duly taken notice. Overall, there has been positive support from the media for the cause of Education for All (EFA). It must be remembered, however, that media only reflects what is current in society balancing the different pressures that are operational. In that direction, the cause of the poor is not a high

priority. More powerful vested interests always dominate the coverage on media. Within that, the coverage received by basic education in the last decade and more has not been disappointing. It

certainly has created an irreversible favourable climate and opinion for greater investments and attention towards basic education.

Social Mobilisation for EFA

While the media has played a role in the issues and concerns for basic education thereby creating an ambience in favour of greater investments and innovative activities, this role is largely restricted to the educated middle-class and the ruling elite who are the key players in policy planning and implementation. Advocacy and opinion building is one critical area where media has a role. However, another equally important area is that of demand generation.

Very often, the beneficiaries of a government welfare programme are unaware of the facilities and benefits on offer. The credibility of the government programme, the high-handed and officious attitude of government functionaries, the poor track record of teachers and educational administrators to care for the poor or socially disadvantaged, are all factors that have contributed to the alienation of the poor from government programmes. Local communities have also despaired at the petty corruption and unresponsive manner of functioning of government departments. In the face of such negative conditions, any new initiative for Education for All (EFA) has to establish its credentials and demonstrate its sincerity of purpose.

Unless the intended beneficiaries come forward and the local communities ensure that the facilities

set up by government function well, the very purpose will be defeated. Parents have to be persuaded to send their daughters to school regularly and not withdraw them at the slightest pretext. At the same time, schools have to be conveniently located and provided with minimal facilities of toilets and drinking water, social discrimination and humiliation of the poor and disadvantaged in school has to be ended so that the school becomes an inviting environment where children feel secure and happy. Planning facilities and providing teachers is not the solution. Parents will have to be assured of the benefit and motivated to send their children to school.

Here, communication media play a role in demand generation by providing basic information and creating awareness and also demonstrating the goodwill and sincerity of the administration. While mass media (radio, TV, newspapers and cinema) have a role, it is the local media like folk plays and performances, exhibitions and *melas* (fairs) and community meetings that have a greater persuasive capacity. What is true for enrolling children in schools is crucial for drawing adults to the literacy classes. Children by and large are expected to go to school to study. It requires a high degree of learner motivation to join a literacy class. Social mobilisation, as amply demonstrated in the literacy campaigns, is the key to the success of the programme.

Broadly speaking, communication media contribute in motivating volunteers and functionaries as well as encouraging learners to participate in the programme. Whether it is the folk media and cultural *jathas*, as used during the Bharat Gyan Vigyan Jatha (BGVJ) in 1990 and 1992 or again in the Samata women's Jatha in 1993 or in the cultural *jathas* in the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) district, or the carefully designed radio and TV spots or the literacy song ***Padhna Likhna Seekho*** (learn to read and write) based on a poem/song by Bertolt Brecht, the objective is the same: make an emotional appeal to the viewer to identify with the cause of eradication of illiteracy or, in the case of learners, realize the necessity of becoming literate and so, desire to become literate.

Mass Media Campaign Strategy

NLM has used a mass media campaign strategy to create awareness among the educated to volunteer their time for literacy. The experience of NLM's mass media campaign effort is detailed below followed by the abortive effort of a similar campaign planned for UEE and primary education as a fundamental right.

The National Literacy Mission (NLM) was set up in 1988 by the Government of India as a time-bound programme to make 100 million persons, in the age-group 15-35 years, literate by the end of the VIII Five Year plan (1992-97). It was recognised at the outset that this gigantic task could not be achieved by government effort alone. The widespread and voluntary participation of people was necessary as motivators, teachers and organisers of literacy classes. To achieve this goal,

NLM had to generate awareness among the general public about the problem of illiteracy in India and mobilise their support and voluntary contribution towards its eradication.

A social communication campaign, consisting of TV, radio and press advertising was targeted at the literate population primarily to enlist volunteers to teach the illiterate persons. In particular, the mass media campaign was directed at students, housewives and retired people who, it was felt had the time to spare and could be influenced to volunteer their time. The mass media communication sought to make literacy a 'top-of-mind' social issue for every individual and motivate the educated to teach one/few. It also attempted to motivate the functionaries and create a more congenial atmosphere for them to function. Adult literacy had been earlier regarded as a useless activity by other government officials.

The creative strategy for the campaign hinged on the idea of giving the volunteer a deep emotional satisfaction (benefit) by making another person literate, thereby changing her life. The line *Chalo padhayen, kuch kar dikhayen* (teach someone, do something worthwhile) used in all the advertising was an attempt to inspire the voluntary spirit or desire to do some service to others latent in everyone. There had been very little advertising on this issue before this and the campaign ran on radio and TV continuously from March 1991 till January 1992.

A study conducted by MARG to assess the impact of the campaign showed that 75 per cent of the audience had become aware of the campaign and

to a large extent regarded illiteracy as an important social issue. About 45 per cent claimed to have been motivated to some extent to teach and over 20 per cent of all respondents claimed to have started teaching. From the universe of primary target audience of students, housewives and retired people 19 per cent responded to the advertising and sought literacy teaching kits. Adult literacy functionaries found greater appreciation of their work among their colleagues. The study also revealed that there was a vast potential of untapped volunteers and the delay in responding to requests for literacy kits had resulted in subsequent demotivation.

It was fortunate that the mass media campaign was running when the first success of the TLC in Kerala, Pondicherry and other districts like Pudukkottai, Medinipur, Chittoor and Nellore was making news. The combined effect was to ensure that adult literacy became a national priority with increased investments and acceptance of the TLC model as the dominant strategy. Films documenting the experience of the TLC campaigns showed the upsurge of voluntary effort in various parts of the country and kept up the motivation of the literacy workers. As a social mobilisation effort, 1990-92 was perhaps the most successful and effective campaign ever undertaken for basic education in this country.

As a contrast to the successful social mobilisation campaign of NLM in the early 90s, the similar effort for Universal Elementary Education (UEE) attempted later did not take off. After the 1996 General Elections, the new government at the Centre was very keen to introduce a Bill in

Parliament that would make the right to primary education a fundamental right. In order to create awareness among parents, teachers, social workers and the community it was felt that a social mobilisation campaign should be launched to support the National Elementary Education Mission (NEEM) that was to be the executive arm of Government of India to ensure achievement of UEE.

With the support of UNICEF, a qualitative and quantitative study was conducted by Mode Research amongst parents, children, teachers, local leaders, officials and policy makers in the states of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar to aid in understanding the attitudes of the various target groups. This study was the key input in designing communication interventions and also provided the benchmarks against which the results of the interventions could be evaluated at a later date.

The study identified the motivators and barriers to enrolment and retention so that communication and programmatic interventions could be decided. Some of the favourable conditions that acted as motivators were the proximity of the school to all children, availability of basic infrastructure like toilets, number of teachers available in the school, pre-school or early childhood care and education centres (ECCE), active participation of *panchayat* bodies and village education committees (VEC), and efforts made by the teacher to ensure enrolment. The barriers to enrolment and retention were the perceived lack of relevance of available primary education among poor and illiterate parents who were also predominantly from SC/

ST communities, the indirect costs of schooling in terms of books and uniforms, opportunity costs of keeping children in school and reluctance of parents to continue sending girls to school after attainment of puberty.

One of the key recommendations of the study was a communication campaign to reinforce the role played by the teacher in the education system and thereby enhance their status in the eyes of the community. The target group would be the community and the conventional mass media channels of radio and television were recommended. The communication strategy that was developed subsequently built upon the recommendations of the study and suggested a pilot phase in which some ideas could be implemented and tested, and a simultaneous consultation with key players in selected states to develop more specific strategies for the states. Development of a symbol for NEEM/UEE and using carefully selected excerpts from cinema on issues of primary education and packaging them as TV spots with a message were the thrust of the communication intervention. Linking the campaign with the 50 years of India's Independence then being celebrated all across the country with community events to be organised everywhere to take the public discussion on the right to elementary education and UEE forward were other initiatives that were planned.

Unfortunately, the slender majority of the government in office and the lack of consensus on the necessity of introducing the Bill as well as the uncertainty about the availability of additional resources for UEE prevented a cohesive approach

to the communication effort. Some TV spots were produced and a few of them were aired but there was no campaign execution. This is illustrative of wasted effort, which is often the case with regard to the use of media for social mobilisation. A successful communication requires a concerted effort by various partners as happened in the early years of NLM. Usually, that is not the case.

Total Literacy Campaigns: The Pudukkottai Case-Study

The appeal of different media is necessarily different. There is no doubt that face to face communication is more direct and therefore, the participatory mode of cultural performances that are rooted in the specificities of the local milieu, have greater attraction and impact. Supported by the interaction through volunteers/activists, this mode of communication has instant, widespread appeal. The success of the Kerala programme is clear evidence of that.

The Bharat Gyan Vigyan Jatha in 1990 was the first major cultural communication effort initiated by the National Literacy Mission. A large number of exhibitions, processions, songs and performances were organized through a network of over 1000 mobile cultural troupes in about 350 districts of the country. This kindled the interest of people in literacy and a large number of teachers, students and other professionals came forward to volunteer their time in literacy work. Those who were unlettered, particularly the women, overcame their shyness and reticence and came forward to take part in the literacy campaign. It was the social mobilization achieved through these *jathas* and

supported by the mass media that made the district-based Total Literacy Campaign a viable programme strategy for NLM. As an example of the kind of planning that went into the social mobilisation effort for a TLC and the spirit of voluntarism that has been the hallmark of a successful literacy campaign, a brief description of the Pudukkottai experience is detailed below.

The first major effort to mobilise the people for the process of change was undertaken at the district convention held on 23 July 1991. About 10,000 people participated in the district convention. A huge procession led by the key district officials, full-timers and the Director-General of the NLMA was taken out through the streets of Pudukkottai town. It was a colourful, enthusiastic and lively event, which set the tone of the literacy programme in the district.

The procession started off with the lighting of a torch and the raising of literacy slogans by officials, volunteers and participants. The viewers and passers-by were evidently surprised at the sight of the District Collector, *tehsildars* and Block Development Officers walking the entire length of the procession and raising literacy slogans. Although, at first, the officials were a little reluctant to 'take to the streets', they soon drew inspiration from the volunteers who raised slogans with gusto. The procession stopped at street corners, inviting local people to join in and pledge their mite to the campaign. Loud speakers and drums, music and slogans, and indigenous folk dances added to the festive air in the town.

At the district convention an appeal was made to

the people of Pudukkottai to volunteer their services as instructors and to help make the district fully literate – perhaps the first fully literate district of Tamil Nadu, in the 9-45 age group. Learners were exhorted to enroll in literacy centres, as soon as they were opened. A subtle change had been wrought in the relationship between the people and the officials. Till then, the people had sought out the officials for help. The roles had now been reversed: it was the officials and organisers who needed the people's help, as volunteers and instructors.

The success of the district convention set the stage for organising block and village conventions. To a large extent, the district convention was organised 'from above' since the mobilisation was done with the help of the government machinery. The participatory structures had not yet taken root. The block and village conventions were different, as by then a small cadre of *arivoli* (literacy) activists were emerging and the programme was slowly becoming more and more participatory. At the Kunnandarkoil and Pudukkottai block conventions where a rally similar to the district convention was held, the local Members of the Legislative Assembly walked the entire length of the procession and even raised *arivoli* slogans, although they were a little taken aback at being asked to do so at first.

Perhaps, the most important instrument of motivation in the literacy campaign's first phase was the *kalajatha*. The *kalajatha* is an exciting form of street theatre. Not many who see a *kalajatha* go back indifferent to the issues presented. And yet for all its capacity to influence, the *kalajatha* is

characterised by its simplicity. The actors wear no make up, all of them are dressed in simple clothes, uniform in colour and pattern. There are no elaborate sets; a black piece of cloth, a bamboo stick with a few bells strung on a sash tied at the waist serve as the props, used to maximum effect, to communicate ideas and meanings. The musical accompaniments are simple – the traditional *mridhangam* and a few cymbals convey with their music the march of a confident woman or the sound of a door opening or the repetitive sound of a typewriter.

Pudukkottai district has 13 blocks and two municipalities. Fifteen troupes were organised so that each troupe could intensively tour the block/municipality allotted to it. Roughly, each troupe covered 75 villages and a population of about 90,000. The troupes were on the road for about 20 days and gave, in all, about 1200 performances. On an average, there were around three performances every day; the morning shows were in the local school premises and the evening ones in the village common.

Any out-of-the-way activity in a village usually draws a crowd, for very often there is no other entertainment (unless there is a popular film on the common public TV). *Arivoli* plays, however, drew and retained the crowd as the plays had an earthy, rural flavour with a direct appeal to the audience.

Kaditham (letter) is the story of a poor peasant, Rajamanickam, who was unable to read the letter bearing tidings regarding the death in combat of his son in the army. If Rajamanickam wept his heart

out when, at last, the village landlord read the news out to him (but not before he had made him do all the chores at home), many in the audience wept along with him. At Kothamangalam village, an old lady clasped the hands of the lead actor and wept because hers had been a similar story. From the tattered ends of her saree, she carefully took out the fifteen paise she had secured there and handed it over to Dharmarajan, asking him to use it for teaching people. It was this kind of generosity that spurred the organisers and volunteers to give their best.

Saraswati was a popular play with the women. A young girl dares to step out of her house to study and to learn. She refuses to be a slave to the reactionary forces at home and in society. Many women in the audience often nodded their heads as if in approval of the theme. Surprisingly, such plays did not evoke much opposition from the men, perhaps as their services had also been enlisted in the cause of women.

A visit by the *jatha* troupe helped to generate the nucleus of the village-level committee that would later on shoulder the responsibilities of the programme. Food had to be arranged, a stage had to be provided and a public address system had to be installed; for all of these, resources had to be mobilised locally. All these activities helped bring the people together and encouraged them to adopt the programme as their own. The *jatha* would not have been so successful if the artistes had been professionals and if all the arrangements had been paid for by the government.

Of course, there were instances when some



villagers took exception to the kind of plays put up but these were few and far between. The Muslim men of Adambur village initially sternly resisted the idea of a *jatha* visiting the village and staging plays on women's education and equality. In fact, one of the villagers threatened a 'blood bath', if the *jatha* visited his village. It is to the credit of the *arivoli* activists that they not only convinced him to let the *jatha* be performed in his village but also made him provide a fine meal for the troupe members. The voluntary spirit of the troupe members struck a responsive chord in many members of the audience and sometimes in unexpected places.

At Thirumayam village, Kalidas was unable to take part in the day's performance, as he was running a temperature. He had, however, a ready understudy: the van driver, 35-year old Ganesamoorthy who had been taking them round the block. He had been inspired by the spirit of

service of the *jatha* troupe members. He had long ago ceased to be a hired hand, and had become one of the *arivoli* troupe, ready to do his bit for the cause of literacy.

There were many sceptics who feared that as Pudukkottai was a poor, backward district, there would not be many volunteers for the *kalajatha* and that it would be impossible to raise local resources for staging the *arivoli* plays and songs. The sceptics were proved wrong in most part and the *kalajatha* enjoyed a rousing reception in almost all the places it visited.

If a group of amateur actors was able to move the people, and make them sit up and take notice, it was because of the passionate involvement of the artistes themselves, because the plays echoed their lives, their fears and their aspirations. Behind the consummate ease with which the troupe members were able to get a sympathetic response from the audience were days of hard work and preparation.

Educational Media

It has been argued that in order to reach large numbers of students distributed very widely, distance education may become the preferred mode for delivering education of satisfactory quality. In basic education, the application of electronic media like radio and TV has been limited owing to financial constraints and programming capacity. Little or no access to such media in the vast rural areas has also been a deterrent in this regard. When there is no electricity or the supply is erratic, television cannot be relied upon to deliver education in the classroom. Radio seems to have gone out of fashion with little innovative work being done for classroom teaching using radio, though it is being used for development information dissemination quite extensively.

Even so, over the last 15 years there has been a consolidation of efforts made earlier to provide radio and TV support to primary schools. Efforts have been made to supply the hardware to primary schools and community TV sets have continued to be installed through the *panchayat* bodies. Maintenance has remained a problem and consequently the educational programmes produced by CIET and SIETs have been classified as enrichment material to give children a broader vision than what is available in the ordinary primary school. However, a variety of locally available and inexpensive materials have been

used by teachers in an imaginative manner to make learning more interesting. Collectively known as the 'playway' method, these teaching aids like charts, games, kits and activities have made the classroom transaction more fun and interesting. The spread is slow and many schools are still deprived of these items supplied under the Operation Blackboard (OB) scheme or other projects.

In order to make an assessment of the status of educational media in this country, it may be useful to focus on a few case studies and research findings. First, we look at the survey findings on the impact of ETV on primary school children. This is followed by two case studies of current experimental projects using electronic media and satellite broadcasting for literacy and teacher training. The Jhabua literacy through TV project is an ambitious project in one district of Madhya Pradesh where a daily special transmission of literacy support lessons was recently conducted as an experiment to assess the viability of the technology and application systems in the context of rural isolation and socio-economic deprivation. The second case study is from the Karnataka DPEP's experience of using a set of films in an integrated training package for training a large number of primary school teachers as a prelude to the overhaul of the curriculum and classroom

management. Here also, satellite based interactive TV has been used to reach large numbers. Both case studies throw up many questions on the planning and management of such complex projects. Finally, the question of an Educational TV channel is examined since an Educational TV Channel (Gyan Darshan) has been launched on 26 January 2000 and is an idea that holds promise for the future of educational expansion in this country.

Impact of Educational Telecasts – A Study Among Rural Primary Schools

In 1984-85, under the scheme 'INSAT for Education' educational television and audio production facilities were created by setting up the Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET) in NCERT. Under this, educational telecasts were produced for children in rural primary schools and for teacher education. Colour television sets and radio-cum-cassette players (RCCPs) were provided to rural schools on a subsidised basis.

In order to assess the impact of educational telecasts on rural primary school students and teachers and to formulate strategies for the future, CIET commissioned Social and Rural Research Institute (SRI) to conduct a study. The research objectives were (i) to assess the impact of the educational telecasts on primary school children in terms of their language development, comprehension of visual representation and general awareness about the environment; and (ii) to understand teachers' attitudes and perceptions and ascertain factors that promoted or hampered utilisation of the facilities. Both quantitative and

qualitative research techniques were used. Children were tested for language skills, environmental awareness, visual representation and curiosity using tests specially designed for them. Teachers were interviewed using partially structured questionnaires. In addition, in some schools observation studies and focus group discussions were carried out among children who were shown television programmes and questioned on them.

From a list of 40 schools of each type (experimental and control) in each of the three selected states for the study (Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh), 20 schools of each type were selected for each state using systematic random sampling methods. Experimental schools were those schools that had received a television set under the ETV scheme and where children were supposed to watch the educational telecasts. Control schools were those which did not have this facility.

However, in the course of actual fieldwork, it was found that in 17 out of the 60 experimental schools children did not watch the telecasts, though all but one school had a TV set. Thus, though fieldwork was conducted in experimental and control schools as pre-selected, they were subsequently divided into three categories for data analysis, viz.:

- ◆ Experimental schools where children watched the telecasts
- ◆ Experimental schools where children did not watch the telecasts
- ◆ Control schools

The study was conducted in the states of Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. A total of 1200 students from Class II and IV across experiment and control schools were to have been interviewed and tested per state, resulting in a sample of 3600 students. In effect, 2942 students and 213 teachers were interviewed.

The findings of the study clearly showed a direct relationship between viewing of educational telecasts and significantly better performance by children on issues such as curiosity, language skills, and visual representation. Interest in the educational telecasts varied between the three states. The children from Andhra Pradesh expressed a high level of approval of and interest in these programmes (90 per cent). By comparison, only 58 per cent of Orissa children said that the programmes were interesting while 35% said they were not interesting. In Uttar Pradesh, while 32 per cent voted the programmes as being not interesting, 53% were unable to answer. Thus, in Uttar Pradesh, 85 per cent did not say that the programmes were interesting. 95% of Andhra Pradesh children who watched educational telecasts said that they looked forward to the educational telecasts. 60% of the Orissa children answered in the affirmative while only 10% of Uttar Pradesh children expressed enthusiasm.

The more positive attitude of Andhra Pradesh teachers was indicated in their use of teaching aids, their initiative in making teaching aids, their understanding of the potentially powerful role that educational telecasts could play in the learning process and their willingness to use this tool to advantage. 75 per cent the teachers from Andhra

Pradesh confirmed that the school helped them by permitting them to view the educational telecasts. The attitude of teachers from Orissa did not come through with as much strength but their use of teaching aids, their overall positive responses and children's scores indicated some good work by Orissa teachers. Qualitative case-studies showed that schools in Orissa laid high emphasis on course completion and teachers believed they could not spare the time for discussions on the educational telecasts with the children, as in the case of Andhra Pradesh. The attitude of Uttar Pradesh teachers came through as being most indifferent. This attitude can be seen in their non-use of telecasts in teaching, their limited use of teaching aids, their inability to say if the programmes were congruous with the syllabus or not (23 per cent unable to answer compared to 4 per cent each from Andhra Pradesh and Orissa) and their comments during case-studies that they did not discuss telecasts with children since they had a syllabus to cover. None of the teachers from Uttar Pradesh mentioned that the schools permitted them to view telecasts so that they could make use of them in the teaching process.

This study indicated that success of educational telecasts depended on two factors:

- ◆ A good viewing experience which would depend on the quality of the programmes which should be such that children enjoy them and look forward to seeing them. Implicit in this is the quality of support services such as electricity and TV sets with a good reception, all of which could add to the viewing experience.

- ◆ A fertile school atmosphere which encourages learning, discussion, questions and innovations.

The study also revealed a host of problems that need to be addressed if educational telecasts are to play a meaningful role in the classroom. Television sets need to be properly maintained. Lack of electricity was another problem. The telecast timings are often unpredictable as Doordarshan disrupts educational telecasts, without prior notice, when sports events or other live coverage takes precedence. Teachers also do not have advance information on the day's telecast and cannot prepare the class accordingly. Teachers require to be trained in utilisation of the telecasts and other media materials to enhance the learning experience of the children. There is also scope for improvement in the programme quality of the educational telecasts.

Accelerated Literacy Through TV - The Jhabua Project Case Study

The Indian Space programme is oriented to a practical application of space technology with the aim of promoting national development. The use of satellite television broadcasting for beaming educational and instructional programmes to rural India as communication support to developmental activities has been on the national agenda for over 25 years. Over this period, India has established an operational domestic satellite system – INSAT, providing three basic kinds of services: communications, broadcasting and meteorology.

The Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO)

concern for developing applications to support education and development is reflected in its efforts to undertake joint projects with user agencies. SITE (1975-76) was one such major project undertaken jointly with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to develop national capabilities of satellite broadcasting and its applications. This led to widespread development of satellite broadcasting as well as its use for educational and development purposes by UGC, NCERT, IGNOU, and various other departments and ministries.

While there has been a very significant growth in the television coverage of the country, the access to TV in rural areas is extremely limited. Of the 52 million TV sets in the country about 34 million are in the urban areas. Therefore, 18 million TV sets are distributed in about 95 million households in rural areas. To reach out to the disadvantaged sections of the rural society, community-viewing facilities need to be established. Based on the experience of satellite broadcasting to rural areas (SITE) and interactive training (TDCC), the Jhabua Development Communications Project (JDCP) configuration was evolved by ISRO.

Since November 1996, Development and Educational Communication Unit (DECU) of ISRO, Ahmedabad has been executing the JDCP. 150 Direct Reception Sets (DRS) were installed and a regular transmission of development related programmes has been going on in the areas of health, agriculture, watershed management, panchayati raj, education and general information and entertainment. The interactive training programme (ITP), is also a major component of JDCP in which a one way video and two way

audio teleconferencing network is utilised to provide interactive training to block and village level functionaries. Satellite based talk-back terminals have been provided to all the 12 blocks in Jhabua district for ITP. The project is implemented with the support of the Madhya Pradesh Government and Jhabua district authorities. Apart from the internal staff of ISRO, a host of external producers and research organisations have been involved in the project and regular feedback and other research and evaluation studies are being carried out. Originally a two-year project, it was extended till October 1999 and the area of coverage is being expanded with DRS soon being installed in all 612 panchayats of the district. In fact, Jhabua will become the first district in the country with a community TV in all panchayats.

The National Literacy Mission (NLM) had been set up in 1988 as one of the original five 'technology missions' to tackle the major problems of the country. Application of technology and scientific research was a cornerstone of these missions. In Jhabua, a Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) was launched in 1995 targeting 340,674 non-literate persons of whom 157,984 were male and 182,690 were female. The TLC went through all the stages and by the end of the campaign in October 1997, 152,393 persons (less than half the number targeted) had become neo-literate or semi-literate achieving a fragile level of literacy that required reinforcement through a sustained post-literacy (PL) and continuing education (CE) programme. Otherwise, there was a likely danger of relapse into illiteracy. In Jhabua, there was a long delay in starting the PL programme and only

towards the end of 1998 were the funds available for starting such a PL programme.

While numerous attempts have been made to promote literacy through television, no systematic effort has been made to teach literacy through television. NLM had produced a television series called **Chauraha** that was telecast but these were unsupported with preparation of the learners groups and training of the volunteer instructors. In the context of the TLC in Jhabua and the opportunity provided by JDCP, DECU initiated the planning process of a special project using television to accelerate the acquisition of literacy. A meeting of experts was held in DECU in March 1998 to consider the feasibility of such a project and define the contours of such a project. Subsequently, a team from DECU visited Jhabua in December 1998 to assess the response of the District authorities and other agencies concerned with literacy towards the adult literacy through television project. Since the post-literacy (PL) programme had just been approved for Jhabua, there was keen interest to revive the literacy effort and television seemed to be the right 'booster' input to enthuse volunteers and learners. It was felt that about six months of preparation time would be necessary to prepare the ground and also produce the special literacy programmes on TV that would supplement the learning process at the literacy centres.

The next important step in the planning process was a workshop held in ISRO, Ahmedabad to work out the details of the adult literacy through TV project and assign roles and responsibilities to the different agencies involved in it. The key objectives

of the workshop were to define the syllabus and on that basis design the media package in terms of the number, content and format of the programmes; to describe the administrative set-up for implementing the literacy project in Jhabua and identify other organisations from which support would be needed for the project; and, to define the broad outline of research and evaluation to be adopted for the project.

The experimental nature of the project was recognised and the practical difficulties in ensuring motivation of adult learners were also accepted. Television's role in creating an enthusiasm for literacy through motivational programmes and publicity to the literacy through television project was emphasised. Sufficient preparation on the ground would have to be made so that learners gather at the venue to watch the TV programmes and the literacy instructors are trained and prepared to utilise the TV lessons to maximum benefit. It was felt that linking with other successful development programmes in Jhabua, like the watershed development programme or the savings and credit groups would help the literacy effort to become sustainable. At the end of the workshop an action plan for the Adult Literacy through TV project in Jhabua emerged with the following features and activity schedule:

- ◆ TV programme transmission with special literacy programmes from June – October 1999 for four months (16 weeks);
- ◆ 60 programmes with literacy content (5-6 programmes each covering 12 identified development concerns);

- ◆ 20 additional programmes for awareness building and preparation;
- ◆ Programme briefs to be readied by DECU after consultations with ZSS, Jhabua and SRC by 15 March and one-day meeting with all producers by end-March 1999;
- ◆ Meeting with the Collector and other district authorities, state-level representatives scheduled for the second week of March to chalk out implementation, training including ITP planning, field support and identifying resource persons and groups;
- ◆ Comprehensive project proposal with activity schedule to be finalised after meeting in Jhabua in the second week of March;

In the meeting in Jhabua soon after that, it became clear that a large number of persons who had not been enlisted during the TLC would have to be inducted into the present phase of the literacy campaign. The district authorities were therefore keen to use the existing basic literacy primers to begin with, rather than the specially designed primer for the TV literacy project, as suggested in the February workshop. Since the implementation of the project had to be done by the ZSS, it was important to take their view into consideration. However, it meant that the software for the literacy project would not be an integrated whole as recommended in the February workshop. It had been envisaged that a specially designed 'bridge' primer would be prepared with 12 lessons covering the different development areas of primary

importance in Jhabua. The TV lessons would reinforce and illustrate the lessons in the primer spreading over 60 programmes averaging 5 programmes for each primer lesson.

In the one-day meeting with the producers on 1 April 1999 this problem became more apparent as producers struggled with a variety of formats, character continuity and narrative flow between programmes. The lessons of the existing primers were not written as a continuous narrative but rather as texts to illustrate usage of letters as they got introduced. Producers also had to contend with the difficulty of doing a limited number of programmes each. Evolving some common elements for all programmes, using music, dance and humour, balancing the information content with literacy instruction, and finishing the entire production load within a few months was a daunting task for the production team.

It was subsequently decided that a set of 100 programmes would be produced in all. 20 programmes to be produced initially for awareness building on literacy and the project itself. 60 programmes based on the three primers would be produced by external (to DECU) producers and would address the neo-literates directly. Finally, a set of 20 programmes was to be produced on post-literacy. These television programmes, though based on the literacy primers, would only serve as support material for the volunteers teaching the identified set of adult learners.

As per the schedule, telecast of the awareness programmes on the literacy through TV project was begun in June. A meeting with the district

authorities was held on 19 June 1999 to review the status of identification of learners and volunteers, distribution of the existing primers in stock and printing of additional primers and distributing them, finalising the date of commencement of telecast of literacy lessons on TV and completion of a baseline survey prior to that. The district authorities admitted that there were difficulties in motivating the tribals to come forward and participate in the literacy programme. They were also not interested in the health and other development programmes. Seasonal migration was very high and after October it would be difficult to continue any programme. Co-ordination with other departments was essential for the success of the programme. However, most of the preparation was done and the telecast could be started soon.

Since a pre-survey had to be done in order to assess the literacy gain later, it was necessary to have a complete list of volunteers and adult learners to make a selection from the 150 locations. The list was overdue from the district authorities and it was expected by 28 June 1999. Since the pre-survey would take two weeks, it was agreed that the telecast of the programmes would commence from 19 July 1999. In the meanwhile, a training programme for the volunteers through a face to face training programme was designed to be provided by SRC along with two resource persons from each of the 12 blocks (24 persons). Simultaneous training in two locations was conducted between 13-15 July to ensure that all volunteers were acquainted with the particularities of the project and familiar with adult literacy teaching methods.

It was envisaged that adult literacy class would be between 6.00pm – 7.00pm according to the following schedule:

6.00pm-6.30pm	face to face teaching by the volunteer
6.30pm-6.50pm	telecast of literacy programme on adult literacy
6.50pm-7.00pm	recapitulation and reinforcement of the TV lesson

It was further agreed that from Chapter 7 of Primer One onwards only the second part of the programme and the test lessons would be repeated. It was assumed that the learners would have got the hang of the lessons and the learning will be faster. There would also be no telecast of lessons on Saturdays and Sundays.

The training programme of the 150 volunteers who were *gurujis* (nonformal education teachers) under the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) of the Madhya Pradesh Government were completed on schedule but they were unsure about their availability at the adult literacy centres in view of training and other activities under the DPEP programme. An observation made by the trainees was that the special transmission timing (6pm-7pm) was inconvenient for the learners, as they would not return from the fields till evening, that is, after 7pm. It was explained that the main JDCP transmission started at 7.15pm and that could not be disturbed. The trainees were urged to persuade the learners to attend the classes at 6pm. Also, the trainees were requested to verify the lists of learners

provided by ZSS to DECU and confirm their availability.

In view of the complexity of the task, it is apparent that DECU attempted to make adequate preparation. However, it is also clear that the State Government or the District authorities did not have a sense of ownership of the project or a clear understanding of the complex nature of the implementation tasks. The technology and the systems management concerns also took priority over the confidence building exercise with the community. A project that is crucially dependent on the voluntary participation of the people cannot expect an outside intervention to succeed without the willing co-operation of the people. It is not surprising therefore that the feedback team of researchers, who visited Jhabua after the literacy special transmission had started, found the TV set not switched on in several locations and numbers of adult learners far below the expected number. Since the final evaluation report of this project is being completed it is not possible to comment on the outcome of the project. But some of the lessons are clear. A top-down, technology and management driven project with no direct benefit perceived by the viewers is not likely to succeed. Involving the people and the grassroots functionaries in the planning process from the beginning is very necessary.

Karnataka DPEP Film-based Teacher Training Module – A Case-Study

The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) has been the major new initiative to achieve Universalisation of Elementary Education

(UEE) in India. It was launched in seven states in the first phase in 1993. The new strategy was to operationalise district level planning taking a holistic view of primary education and laying great emphasis on participatory planning and management. DPEP has a marked gender focus and seeks to enhance school effectiveness through inputs in teacher training and decentralised management. Karnataka was one of the states where DPEP was launched in the first phase.

One of the key concerns of DPEP is school effectiveness through pedagogic renewal and decentralised and better management involving parents and the local community. It is recognised that the teacher plays a critical role in both areas and therefore in-service training of teachers has been a thrust area in DPEP. In Karnataka, the first teachers' training module was developed in 1995 and the Block Resource Centre (BRC) faculty was trained on the module since the BRC faculty had to conduct the training with the teachers. Subsequently, a massive teachers' training programme was conducted in the DPEP districts. Feedback from the teachers after the training and later brainstorming lead to a long process of revision of the training module.

Teachers found the training module too theoretical with little connection with the reality on the ground. In a single or two-teacher school it is difficult to do continuous evaluation, as is the requirement of minimum levels of learning (MLL) assessment. How does a single teacher handle a multi-grade teaching situation which is often the case? Supervision by departmental staff who did not understand the MLL concept was not helpful as

they could not provide guidance to the teachers. During the brainstorming, the basic issue of what is to be done in the training and why and how were addressed. It was admitted that there was inadequate experience of activity-based teaching and participatory training methodologies among trainers and teachers. It was therefore necessary to gain first-hand experience of child-centred, activity-based learning.

Subsequently, a series of workshops were held to experience and learn about activity based teaching. This led to a better understanding of participatory training as different from conventional training; developing techniques for replacing lectures with activity based experiences and mutual learning through non-hierarchical and informal means. BRC faculty members (trainer teachers) who participated in these workshops were then attached to schools for tryout of activity based methods.

As an outcome of the series of workshops and the school attachment programme, the teachers' training package was revised thoroughly, giving a new vision of the activity based classroom; inquiring into assumptions about children and the nature of learning; and, defining the concept of an activity with extensive notes on methods and materials and the role of the teacher in an activity based classroom. Several approach papers on language, mathematics, environmental studies (EVS), gender, MLL and evaluation were also prepared for the teachers.

The revised teachers' training programme for DPEP in Karnataka developed a set of training materials for teachers and trainers and an activity

bank. Regular supplementary materials were provided through the **Kali Nali** wall newspapers distributed to every primary school in the DPEP districts. A large-scale training programme was undertaken to cover 31,664 teachers from DPEP I districts and 28,178 teachers in DPEP II districts. With the commencement of the teachers' training as per the revised training design, production of a series of seven films was initiated to supplement the training programme.

The films were based on the premise that existing data on achievement at primary levels in the schools call for an urgent re-examination of the problems and issues relating to enrolment, access and participation of children in learning. Such an examination cannot be meaningful without entering into a dialogue with the three principal actors in primary education, namely children, teachers and community members. This process initiated by DPEP Karnataka in 1996 resulted in the development of a series of films entitled '**Before we begin the lesson...**'

The films were made in a participatory mode through workshops spread over a year with children, teachers and VEC members. In the workshops an environment was created, so that participants could critique and debate the existing system with frankness, and analyse and re-define their roles within the educational system. For example, teachers examined the extent of their participation and autonomy in curriculum formulation, designing teaching learning material, creation of a teaching methodology and developing evaluation techniques. Similarly, community members

discussed the values inherent in the school system, and how these have alienated children from the rural environment. These films raise and illustrate issues through a mixture of documentary footage and dramatised scenes performed by experienced theatre activists. Special attention is given to presenting examples which reflect the *real* experience of the intended audience – teachers, educational administrators and VEC members. At no time do the films lapse into 'expert' lectures.

Simultaneously, the DSERT, Bangalore initiated the production of two films documenting the experience of a new child-centred pedagogy in HD Kote block of Mysore district with support from UNICEF. The HD Kote experiment is based on the experience of the Rishi Valley 'school in a bag' approach. Under DPEP, the HD Kote experiment has been upscaled to six additional blocks. The two films documenting the HD Kote experience have also been included in the training design. Thus, the nine films in the series are:

1. *Whose school is it anyway?* (The focus of this film is on reasons for children not accessing or dropping out of school – seen from the perspective of the community, children and teachers. There are interviews with SC families, interviews with girls involved in cattle grazing as a full time chore, discussions with members of a VEC, and workshop discussions with teachers.)
2. *Play and learn.* (The film looks at reasons for children achieving poorly, despite access and participation in school – mostly from the viewpoint of teaching methodologies and poor unattractive

learning environments. The film proceeds to build upon the concept of child-centred, activity based teaching learning and shows how teachers, once they acquire an understanding of the concept of 'activity', can create their own activities which can be used as various levels of multi-grade teaching.)

3. *Syllabus, syllabus!* (The film begins with a sequence of children struggling through texts totally unrelated to their own lives. There is a discussion with teachers where they highlight the need for local specific curriculum which is meaningful to the lives and environment of rural children and the participation of teachers in curriculum creation and textbook development. This film introduces the idea of respecting the native knowledge of children, and building on it, rather than making them ashamed of native systems through a play entitled "Tiger, tiger, where are your teeth".)

4. *Joy of learning.* (The film documents the **Nali Kali** UNICEF supported project. It focuses on principles of classroom teaching and management processes, which makes it possible for teachers to handle children at different levels of learning, and for children to enjoy learning. The film highlights how teachers can collectively exercise the responsibility of formulating a curriculum, designing teaching learning materials, creating teaching methodology, conducting and reinforcing activities, and setting in place an ongoing, continuous evaluation system with creativity and sense of 'ownership'.)

5. *Sha, sha, sha is correct.* (The several issues covered in this film are (i) why and how language

is learnt by children followed by a discussion among teachers on whether children should be permitted to articulate comfortably or made conscious of purity of language; (ii) when and how should writing skill development be introduced in school; (iii) the experience of the HD Kote project is documented to show how teachers break down learning into the smallest units easily manageable by the child. (iv) Finally, the film deals with the issue of fantasy in language learning through a folktale.)

6. *Add, subtract.* (The film looks at the importance of Maths in real life and teachers discuss why Maths is regarded as a threatening subject. The common perception that girls are not good in Maths is dispelled by teachers who argue that absence from school owing to attending to other chores often is the cause for girls not being able to keep up with Maths. How to manage the load of the Maths curriculum is demonstrated through the HD Kote project experience where teacher successfully break down Maths learning into small units and used real objects to teach children.)

7. *Let Us Build Together* (The film focuses on the upscaling of the UNICEF sponsored experimental HD Kote project to six additional blocks in Mysore district under DPEP. The difficulties faced by the teachers of the new schools to adapt themselves to act as 'facilitators' rather than 'dictators' and their optimism in this regard is shown. Every six months teachers and resource persons meet together to revise the curriculum, activities and learning materials. There is a new confidence in the district. Resource Persons and teachers have

created new songs, stories and activities.)

8. *May I know your caste?* (The film shows VEC members discussing the existing caste and class problems which are largely responsible for non-enrolment and drop-out of SC/ST children, particularly girls. The film also presents the view of VEC members that school timings and holidays exclude children from poor households. Schools are run when parents definitely need assistance from their children in the fields and holidays occur when no real help is needed. The film includes a play on gender and caste discrimination and ends with women expressing the need and importance of educating girls.)

9. *This is our school.* (The film is a tale of two villages – Hospet and Malkapur. The film documents the micro-planning process in these two villages. While the relationship between teachers and the community is harmonious in Malkapur, it is positively hostile in Hospet. In the war between the community and the teachers, what will be the fate of the school? What will happen to the children? A variety of issues are touched upon and the film ends with a play depicting the helplessness of a teacher in a situation where the school premises are misused by the people of the village.)

These nine films are being used in the training of teachers, and will be seen over a period of time by 70,000-75,000 teachers in Karnataka. The objective of using this particular format for the films is to provoke teachers to speak out, and to begin their own pedagogic inquiry. The training design incorporated the screening of the films to be

followed by discussions among the trainees and with resource persons. As part of the countrywide DPEP effort to use satellite communication for teacher training, the Karnataka DPEP designed its interactive teachers' training programme. The first interactive satellite based training programme for teachers was held in July 1999. The nine films developed by DPEP and DSERT were used in the training programme. The training programme had two components: (a) direct face to face training at the DTIs conducted by identified resource persons, and (b) through a programme transmitted through satellite from a studio set up in Bangalore. The two components were intermixed with each other, and all districts under the DPEP followed a uniform timing for the activities conducted at the district level.

About 35-40 teachers attended the three-day training programme at each of the 12 centres where viewing and talk-back facility had been set up. On an average there were over 50 questions in each session showing the kind of interest that had been generated among the teachers. Many questions were on the caste and gender issues highlighted in the films. There was a lively discussion on language spoken at home and the language used in the textbooks. The HD Kote approach was found stimulating but appeared unreal as the teachers were unable to relate it to their situation. When it was pointed out that the administrative staff had been supportive in HD Kote, the need to change the power relations between administrative supervisory staff and teachers was emphasised. A suggestion came from the teachers that teachers collectives should be formed at the cluster (CRC) level so that teachers have a voice in academic

matters and school management. The resource persons were able to answer the questions adequately but the programme was a little rushed as the training schedule was cut short at the last-minute owing to unavailability of satellite time in the evening.

The technical quality was satisfactory and the team felt happy at having successfully conducted the interactive satellite based training. Experiences varied from district to district but generally everybody felt that the effort was worthwhile and the teachers left with a feeling of hope. However, the careful planning required to ensure that such a programme is successful and that resource persons are available makes the whole exercise very elaborate. Karnataka DPEP would continue its original schedule of training using the films in a non-broadcast mode and only using resource persons available at the training site. Even though a more sophisticated technology could be available, the ground management issues are fairly complex and technology fails to deliver if the whole systems management fails as has been the experience of several projects. Karnataka DPEP's decision to use films as an effective tool in training, coupled with its keenness to ensure that the transaction with the teachers during training is satisfactory and therefore preferring the TV/VCR route, shows a sensible awareness of ground realities.

An Educational TV Channel - Its Relevance and Feasibility

Ever since the Indian Space Research Organisation made satellite transponders available for

communication in 1984 and Doordarshan went beyond terrestrial expansion into creating DD 1, DD 2, DD 3, Regional and International Channels, there has been talk of an Educational TV Channel for the country. The Minister of Human Resource Development announced it formally in 1994. From then on, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) have been planning on it and came close to starting it, albeit hastily, in 1997 calling it "the Freedom Channel". Finally, Gyan Darshan (an educational TV Channel) has been launched on 26 January 2000 with a daily transmission of 16 hours. Nevertheless, some ticklish questions remain. Should it consider the feasibility of a satellite channel presently available only through cable operators with a reach of about 50-60 million in metros and major towns? Or should it reckon that the needs of education should be met by the satellite as well as the terrestrial system by deploying the best delivery system for the education of 400 million people (which is the present reach of Doordarshan)?

India's population of over 950 million consists right from the illiterate, neo-literate, educated to the highly educated. The 1996 UNDP Report on Human Development points out that there are more than 500 million capability poor people in India. The literacy figures range from 90% in Kerala to 38% in Bihar. Even the most educated and professionals need to keep pace with the exponential increase of knowledge in the international arena. Children, youth, women, adults all fall into the ambit of Educational Broadcasting with a need for a wide variety of programmes so far not produced. Obviously the

needs would vary from simple fun and games related to language, culture, maths, science on TV to structured courses on technical, professional or vocational areas or just a 'window to the world' type of continuing education.

Where is this need in India? Largely, it is in the middle and lower middle class of our TV population residing more in smaller towns where exposure to good libraries and competent teachers is limited and which may not have access either to VCR or cable at home. This viewership is mainly confined to the terrestrial system of DD 1 and DD 2.

Existing channels of Doordarshan, the transmitters and viewership information taken from Doordarshan 1996 compiled by its Audience Research Unit shows that while DD 1 viewership was 270 million and DD 2 101 million, the Regional Channels had viewership ranging from 14 to 30 million. The TV exposure was 74% in urban and 31% in rural areas. Only DD was watched by 55% in urban and 29% in rural areas indicating that in rural India, almost all watched DD and a very large percent, (23% out of 31%) watched DD 1. As far as cable and satellite was concerned 19% watched in urban and only 3% in rural parts of the country. In other words, the reach of the ETV Channel (Gyan Darshan) would eliminate not only the entire small town and rural audience but also a major proportion of the urban viewers who do not have cable connection. Even with cable connections they would be entirely at the mercy of cable operators.

The access of TV sets through schools and colleges have failed time and again except for the lone experimental one-year period of SITE in 1975-76.

Even the attempt by UP to give the maintenance to a government undertaking did not make any difference in the schools of UP. The TV sets provided by the government in the schools of Bihar, Orissa, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh remain grossly under-utilised for want of electricity, mismatch of school and telecast hours, teachers' apathy or their maintenance. Neither has the grant of for TV sets and VCRs from UGC to Universities and Colleges resulted in their being used for educational viewing. Hence, the assumptions of viewing should be entirely based on home TV sets, black and white or colour but not on institutional viewing. The planning of telecast has to be done accordingly.

In the various sectors of School, Technical and Higher Education production facilities have been acquired. Some of these Institutes are: UGC and CEC with 17 Media Centres in Universities, IGNOU, CIET and 6 SIETs, Five IITs and 4 TTITs, DECU and National Open School. Analysis of these organisations reveal that there are a large number of programmes in stock and there is a certain rate of production output every year. Roughly estimated, the total stock of good and repeatable programmes come to about 4100 hours and the average annual capacity for production comes to about 370 programme hours per year.

For a channel to create a presence and get established, it is essential that it operates at least for 18 hours every day and has the necessary quantity and quality of programmes. It is assumed that on an average each programme is shown about 4 times a year. Such repeats are essential to cater to all sections of society. Therefore, the Channel

requirement of programmes would be 1642.50 hours/year. It is possible to meet this requirement from the existing stock of programmes and additional programmes produced every year. Of course, the quality in terms of content and production values would have to be greatly enhanced if the channel has to become popular. The Education Channel would require enormous amount of Promo material to be prepared in advance to be a part of all Channels of DD. This investment would be necessary to establish the ETV Channel which may take almost a year if at all, in the limited viewership zone of cable system. It may also require in some cases (children, youth and professionals) outstanding foreign programmes to be acquired, and dubbed in Hindi (being done by Discovery Channel). The cost of multiple telecast rights of foreign produced programmes and dubbing works out to be less than the indigenous productions. About ten percent of foreign programmes with high production values and those which are culturally more neutral, would not only enhance the Channel value but also provide a useful exposure of ETV quality to the Indian producers. Many of the existing materials may also have to be revised to update them. One of the major reasons of average quality of educational programming in India, has to do with the availability of money and bureaucratic controls on it. While millions are spent on equipment, building and salaries, very little money is available for in-house productions. This aspect would need professionalism and liberalisation. We would also need continuous training of manpower as mobility of people is extremely high in television.

The total budget for five years to operate an Education Channel comes to about Rs 2000 million which would include training, production, import of foreign programmes, dubbing, promo, capsuling and unlinking. It has not been very clear in past discussions as to the source of funding for running such a channel. It would be a safe assumption that revenues from advertising could only be expected from the second or the third year. Optimistically, the channel could become self-supporting perhaps after five years or more. But then this brings in a host of questions, which relate to the management of the Channel. Money, Management and Controls are inter-related. Furthermore, who will bear the cost of expansion of the terrestrial system of the Education Channel for its wider reach which will require an additional one time investment of about Rs 150000 million?

Gyan Darshan should be seen as an opportunity and it should not be done without planning the expansion of its terrestrial system (1000 HPTs and LPTs to cover the entire country) in parallel to the development of quality software and setting up of its management system. The Satellite Channel for Education by itself would not reach the various audiences that require programmes in regional languages. While entertainment is acceptable to large audiences in Hindi, education will need the use of regional languages. Hence, a separate terrestrial network for ETV would be necessary. It should be seen as a new challenge and investment to create a learning society and capacity building with far-reaching implications.

Conclusions

With the convergence of telecom, broadcasting and information technologies, society is getting intricately linked up and media's influence is becoming pervasive. In India, there has been an expressed concern over the neglect of basic education and the need for greater attention to UEE has been addressed in the media. By the time the international commitment for Education for All (EFA) by 2000 Jomtien Declaration was made public opinion in India had been built up in favour of it. The success of the literacy campaigns gave a further impetus to the cause of basic education and it became a national priority for all political parties. There may have been differences of opinion on the relative importance of adult literacy and non-formal education, but the concern for UEE and girls education in particular was widely agreed upon. Today, the coverage of basic education in the media is more than it was 10-15 years ago. Not all reporting is a glowing tribute to the endeavours of the State. There is much that is wrong and the media takes notice. Certainly, more could and should be done but, given our social structure, it is not surprising that the needs of the poor and uneducated get neglected.

The success of the literacy campaigns and particularly the social mobilisation effort amply demonstrate the possibility of arousing the voluntary spirit to serve the community, latent in

each one of us. However, the later slowing down of the literacy programme also showed that enthusiasm has to be matched by good quality follow up educational programmes. Using communication media, whether it is the radio and TV or the *kalajatha* and folk theatre performances, to awaken and rally people to the cause of literacy and basic education is achievable but the harder task of sustaining literacy or an educational programme is much more difficult. The irony is that if the programme falters, the credibility of any later communication effort fails. Unfortunately, in India, programming lacks long-term perspective and changes are made frequently. This breeds apathy and cynicism making it doubly difficult to generate enthusiasm through media use and communication efforts.

There has been considerable investments made in using communication technologies in education. In a limited sense, some of it has been to use educational radio and TV for primary education. The promise of a 'technology fix' has been belied as, time and again, it has been proven that the maintenance was weak, the quality of programmes was poor or the necessary preparation on the ground for proper utilisation was missing. A fascination for newer technologies and larger systems encourages planners to think of more innovative projects without learning from the

mistakes of the past and building upon them. There is a rich experience in this country of using educational technology such that manageable projects and programmes can be designed. Very often, impatience and a desire to get quick results do not allow for adequate time to be taken for preparation before a programme is launched. Failures are then attributed to the technology rather than perceiving them as a lapse in planning and management.

The new millennium is ushering an era where networking, interactivity and connectivity are the buzzwords. The new tools of information and communication technology (ICT) are becoming more easily accessible with the rapid spread of

telephony and cheaper hardware. Even so, reaching the unreached will remain difficult for a long time to come. However, using a system configuration that encourages participation and networking rather than a centralised command system (like in all broadcasting) the capacity to assimilate new technology and applying it to basic education can be enhanced among teachers and trainers at district, block and cluster level. Accessing information resource centres online, downloading information (text, pictures and sound) are a reality for many teachers and students in the privileged private schools in this country. Surely, it is possible to extent it to many more teachers and students through a well-planned public investment programme in basic education?

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